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Limitation of Armaments by International Agreement

By HON. FRANK W. MONDELL

House of Representatives, Washington, D. C.

LEST there should be a misunderstanding as to what we mean by disarmament, I will quote Webster's definition of the word, to wit: "The reduction of a military establishment approximately to a peace footing." I may further define the question, as I understand it, by putting it thus: Is there a possibility of being able to secure an international agreement limiting the size and cost of military and naval establishments to a reasonable peace, police or defense basis? To this we might properly add: Is there a reasonable likelihood of the terms of such an agreement being complied with and adhered to, when secured?

To both of these queries I would respond with a hearty affirmative. It is not only possible to secure such an agreement, but I believe the nations of the earth will be found willing and anxious to become parties to such an agreement. Furthermore, I believe that such an agreement when entered into would be kept—at least to an extent and for a period sufficient to entirely justify the undertaking.

The nations will welcome the consideration of the question of disarmament, because it must have become apparent to all that unless there be some agreement on the subject, the world faces the peril of bankruptcy, or, escaping that, the certainty that at the end of a feverish race of competitive armament will come another world war, even more frightful and devastating than that through which the world has just passed.

Great war establishments have constituted the world's heaviest burden since the beginning of history, but they

were not without a certain justification in the days when civilized peoples faced the constant danger of being overrun by neighboring barbaric hordes. That danger eliminated, conquest having been outlawed, no valid excuse remains, except the threat and menace of great or growing establishments maintained or proposed by other nations, for it must be admitted that huge war establishments maintained by any nation are a more or less valid excuse,—if not a good and valid reason,—for the maintenance of like or larger establishments by other nations having valuable territory or important interests. Distance is no longer a defense,—oceans now connect rather than divide nations and no prosperous nation can be either so isolated or so peaceable as to be entirely secure in an armed world.

Time was when ample measures of defense, equally effective for offensive operations, were neither bankrupting nor exhausting, but all that is changed. The cost of modern war is staggering. It involves expenditures running into figures until recently reserved for the calculations of astronomy; and vast as was the cost of the great war just closed, future wars will cost more, for we seem to have but entered on the development and use in war of engines and agencies of superlative size, power and cost.

The Great War startled and shocked the world with its new, novel, and dreadful instruments of destruction, but unless the nations shall by agreement place a limit on the size, cost and expense of the units and totals of war engines and establishments, and shall at least attempt to restrict and limit

the use of certain classes of machines and materials in war, the wars of the future are certain to be not only more costly than even the great struggle through which the world has just passed, but infinitely more frightful and destructive of life and property.

The world having had so recent and startling an object lesson of the fearful cost and frightful character of modern war, the statesmen of the world, realizing as they must that wars of the future must necessarily be even more costly and more frightfully destructive, and that distance has been annihilated and defenses rendered obsolete,—no thoughtful man in a position of responsibility anywhere can fail to realize the necessity for some agreement or understanding which shall relieve the nations of the necessity of utilizing the major portion of the energies of their people in preparing for and waging war, or in paying war debts and meeting war obligations.

With our recent experience of the cost and character of modern war, with our knowledge gained from experience that war's eruptions, conflagrations, and disturbances can no longer be localized, the situation would be bad enough were the world in a normal condition of trade and enterprise, were men's minds tranquil, and nations measurably free from debt. But none of these favorable conditions prevail. The world's production is curtailed and its exchanges sadly out of joint; over a considerable portion of the world disorder and turmoil are the rule; everywhere there is dissatisfaction and unrest. Meanwhile the nations are staggering under appalling burdens of debts that have brought them to the verge of bankruptcy.

In this condition of affairs, who shall say that the world is not ripe for the consideration of the lightening of the burdens of military and naval estab-

lishments? If it is not, the sooner we know it the better, for competitive arming under present conditions threatens the very existence of civilization. The burdens it would entail and the conflicts that would be sure to follow might easily cause a large part of the world to revert to barbarism.

The nations of the earth *will* agree to a reduction of armaments because in such an agreement lies the only promise of relief; the only opportunity for world recovery; the only hope of world progress.

In this condition of affairs it is more than fortunate, it is providential, that the only nation whose people might be able to maintain enormous war establishments, without danger of bankruptcy, is a nation that up to this time, at least, has developed no inclination for conquest, no lust for world power. In our peculiar situation of strength and resources we have, at this juncture of the world's affairs, the greatest opportunity ever offered a people in all the tide of time.

We alone of all the nations of the earth can suggest and propose a reduction of armaments, without an admission of weakness and without having our motives misunderstood. At a time when all the world knows we could, if need be, increase our war equipment and our fighting forces to an overshadowing size and strength, providence has afforded us the opportunity to offer the world a lifting of war burdens and a relief from war dangers which presents to much of the world the only road to restoration and safety. Who shall say that in such a condition of affairs the world will not gladly listen to disarmament proposals?

As the condition of the world's affairs affords us a wonderful opportunity, it also lays upon us a great duty and responsibility. As we are the only nation that can logically, and

without embarrassment, propose the limitation of armaments, it becomes our bounden duty—a duty we can not dodge or escape—to do it, and to do it as quickly as we may when conditions seem ripe for success. Let us not forget that on the sea, at least, we were the only nation that pursued a great program of expansion after the close of the world war, and that it is our great 1916 naval program, still being carried forward by an army of workmen and at vast expense, that was the primary cause and is the continuing provocation of the competitive plans and purposes of other nations. This being true, our duty and our obligation to lead in the direction of disarmament is as compelling as our opportunity is unique and unusual.

Some will say, no doubt, "What of these agreements when made? What assurances have we that those who may enter into them will live up to them? Have not treaties been treated as scraps of paper, and solemn and binding obligations of the nations been frequently repudiated without excuse or even an apology?" Unfortunately that is true, as the world knows by recent and painful experience, and yet we must not judge of the probability of the fulfillment of voluntary obligations such as are proposed, by the world's experience with treaties, which in the main, have been the harsh terms exacted of a defeated people. Furthermore, it is one thing to get the world to agree not to build up a great establishment, the possession of which is certain to lead to a desire to use it, but it is quite another thing to persuade a nation possessing such an establishment from using it for a wicked and a selfish purpose.

The world will, in my opinion, agree to a limitation of competition in armaments, because the world must know that therein lies the only hope

of solvency and rehabilitation. The world will keep such engagements and agreements when entered into, first, because it will be for the self-interest of each nation to do so; second, because it will be to the interest of all to see that each keeps its agreement for the benefit of all. When the nations put in operation a plan that appeals to the enlightened self-interest of the major part of the nations, the probability is that the said major part will see to it that the balance of the world lives up to its agreements for the general good.

All history teaches what recent history has proven conclusively, that a nation possessing a great fighting machine will develop an inclination to use it; that with the growth and maintenance of such an establishment there is developed a pride, a jealousy, and a false philosophy which urges and justifies its use.

Recent history has startlingly illuminated the fact of the constantly increasing difficulty of localizing wars; the constantly increasing tendency arising out of the discoveries of science; the stimulation of invention, and the development of industries to spread the conflagrations of war to the ends of the earth; the increasing menace that a great war establishment anywhere is to the peace of the entire world.

The great war gave us its shocking object lessons of the staggering cost and the appalling frightfulness of modern war, and every day brings us some new illustration of the fact that wars of the future are likely to be, if the world continues a competitive development of war implements, engines and agencies, immeasurably more frightful and costly than even the great conflict recently closed.

All this being true, and susceptible of demonstration,—in fact, so patent that no well-informed person will attempt to deny it—the question is,

what we are going to do about it? Shall we accept the situation as incurable, the appalling consequences as inevitable, or shall we as a great people, afforded a providential opportunity, extend the invitation and point the way to a sane and reasonable agreement among the nations for the curbing of military ambition and for the limitation of military and naval establishments within bounds calculated to the maintenance of the world's peace?

Will the world accept our invitation?

It unquestionably will, because all nations realize they can not maintain the burdens of competitive armaments. Will the nations keep their pledges? They will—at least, until the conditions which would persuade them to enter into such agreements had entirely passed away; and long before that time we may reasonably hope that all nations shall have learned to settle their differences without the armed conflicts that leaves even the victor exhausted and impoverished.

Curtailment of Armaments

By HON. FREDERICK C. HICKS

Representative in Congress from the State of New York. Member of Naval Affairs Committee.

ONE of the great problems of the age, a problem which has occupied the minds of men since that distant time when man first held a weapon in his hand and fought against his fellow for supremacy, is the question of armaments.

Last winter the Committee on Naval Affairs of Congress, of which I am a member, held hearings on the question of reduction of armaments. The committee was honored by the attendance of many distinguished gentlemen, including General Pershing, Ex-Ambassador and Peace Commissioner Henry White, General Bliss, Peace Commissioner, Secretary Daniels, Sir Philip Gibbs, Acting Secretary of State Davis, and others. The views expressed were strongly in favor of armament reductions.

In a statement made at those hearings by General Bliss, a soldier and a statesman whose views are worthy of deepest consideration, he said with emphasis that if the question of the limitation of military establishments could be submitted to the peoples of the world, to the man at the plow, to

the man toiling in the factory and in the office, and to the woman in the home, there would be such an overwhelming verdict in favor of a reduction that the vote against the proposition would be a negligible factor.

If all dangers that lead to wars, or the causes which provoke trouble could be removed, it would follow as a natural corollary that there would be no need of great military establishments at all, but unfortunately for society it does not seem possible to eliminate these causes.

In a statement made by General Wood a number of years ago he said that "nine out of ten wars are based on trade, the other one perhaps on race expansion and in times past upon dynastic influence, but wars arise principally from trade." This statement, I believe, depicts a true conception of the causes of war. Commercial greed and territorial aggrandizement, due to the desire for new fields of exploitation, have been the heart and soul of most of the mighty tragedies that have subverted justice and battered the human race for centuries. Because commer-